



NEWS RELEASE

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KANSAS CITY ATTORNEY CHOSEN TO OVERSEE FAIRNESS IN REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

WASHINGTON – Michael Barrera, an attorney from Kansas City and the former owner and manager of several small businesses, has been named by President Bush to lead the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of the National Ombudsman.

"As National Ombudsman, Michael Barrera has a crucial job to perform in reducing the federal regulatory stranglehold upon small businesses," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. **"He will ensure that federal regulatory enforcement and compliance actions are fairly applied to save time and burdensome expense for small business owners."**

Barrera's position as National Ombudsman was created by Congress in 1996 under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA). This legislation empowers the National Ombudsman to receive, investigate, and report complaints and comments from small business owners regarding federal regulatory enforcement and compliance actions.

The act also created 10 Regional Fairness Boards to provide small businesses with the opportunity to comment on enforcement activity by federal regulatory agencies.

"Through this provision, Congress and the President created a forum for small businesses to participate in the regulatory process by establishing a process for expressing their views and sharing their experiences about federal regulatory activity," said Barreto.

Barrera received his law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1989 and a bachelor's degree from Kansas State University in 1982. He is a member of the Missouri Bar Association, Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association and Hispanic Bar Association, and is a former member of the Texas Bar Association.

In private practice he co-founded two law firms in Kansas City focusing on general civil litigation, small business startups, workers' compensation, criminal defense, and personal injury. Barrera's legal experience includes service as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Jackson County, Mo.

In addition to running two law firms, Mr. Barrera's small business experience includes management of two family-owned restaurants in the Kansas City area. As past chairman and president of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City he helped increase membership by 600 percent and corporate funding by 400 percent.

For more information about all of SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U-ASK-SBA, or visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

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